

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Municipal Clerks and the Milwaukee City Board of Election Commissioners

FROM: Wisconsin Elections Commission

DATE: January 1, 2018

SUBJECT: Chief Inspector Certification/Recertification and Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

Section 7.30(6)(b), Wis. Stats., requires that a chief inspector, who has been certified by the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC), must be present at each polling place for every election. The first election at which this statute was in force was the 2004 September partisan primary.

Responsibility of the Wisconsin Elections Commission

The legislature directed the Wisconsin Elections Commission to promulgate administrative rules with respect to the training and certification of chief inspectors. S. 7.30(1), Wis. Stats. The rules provide for a basic training (Baseline) in order to be initially certified, and require six hours of additional election education training for recertification. GAB Ch. 11.

Responsibility of Municipal Clerk

It is the responsibility of the municipal clerk to advise the chief inspector about opportunities to certify/recertify and to track the hours and type of training each chief inspector has attended.

QUESTION: Why must recertification training be no less than six hours?

ANSWER: The decision to require no less than six hours of training per term was based on there being six elections that occur in an election inspector's term: The Spring Primary and Spring Election, which occur in both the odd and even-numbered years of the term, and the Partisan Primary and General Election which occur in the August and November of the even-numbered year of the term. The WEC believed that averaging one hour of training per election during a chief inspector's term is a good practice.

Baseline training is required to be conducted Wisconsin Elections Commission staff. However, subsequent recertification training is **not** required to be a class conducted by the Wisconsin Elections Commission. Municipal clerks need to spend time training, updating and reviewing with the chief inspector and should assume that responsibility. Municipal clerks should not exclusively rely on outside trainings to accumulate recertification hours. "The classes were too far away" is not an excuse for failing to recertify chief inspectors. See the document entitled "*Certification/Recertification of Chief Inspectors*," for details on obtaining approval for independent training conducted by the municipal clerk, and information on other methods of achieving recertification.

Certification and Recertification

Since, 2004, the Wisconsin Elections Commission has conducted 3-hour "Baseline" training sessions around the state for the purpose of initially certifying chief inspectors. Baseline training is required in order to be initially certified as a chief inspector. A never-before-certified chief inspector who attends Baseline training is qualified as a certified chief inspector for the term in which the Baseline session was attended. A total of six hours is required in order to recertify for the subsequent term. Baseline counts for three of the six hours.

QUESTION: I have a person (who was not previously certified as a chief inspector) who is interested in becoming a certified chief inspector. What does the person have to do to qualify as a certified chief inspector for the 2018-2019 term?

ANSWER: A person who was not previously certified as a chief inspector may accomplish certification by taking the Baseline training. Attendance at Baseline training will certify the new chief inspector for the 2018-2019 term. The newly-certified chief inspector is eligible to serve at all subsequent elections during the 2018-2019 term.

QUESTION: Now that my never-before-certified chief inspector is certified for the 2018-2019 period, what else must he do in order to recertify for the 2020-2021 term?

ANSWER: In order to recertify for the 2020-2021 term, the inspector will need to accumulate an additional three hours of training during the 2018-2019 period.

QUESTION: What if my chief inspector was certified, but failed to recertify before 12/31/17?

ANSWER: If the previously-certified chief inspector failed to meet the recertification requirements prior to December 31, 2017, the chief inspector has lost his or her certification, and must start over. This means that in order to qualify as a certified chief inspector for the 2018-2019 period, the previously-certified chief inspector must attend the 3-hour Baseline training **and** accumulate three additional hours of training, before his or her first election in the term. Baseline and three additional hours will also certify the inspector as a chief inspector for the 2018-2019 term.

Summary

- A previously-certified chief inspector who accumulated six re-certification hours before 12/31/17 is eligible to serve as a certified chief inspector through 12/31/19. In order to recertify for the 2020-2021 term, the chief inspector must accumulate six hours of approved election education before December 31, 2019.
- A previously-certified chief inspector who failed to meet the recertification requirements before December 31, 2017, has lost his or her certification. The previously certified chief inspector must attend the 3-hour Baseline and accumulate three additional hours before being eligible to serve as a certified chief inspector at any election in the 2018-2019 periods. Baseline plus three additional hours also recertifies them for the 2020-2021 term.
- A never-before-certified inspector who attends Baseline training during the 2018-2019 term is eligible to serve as a certified chief inspector for all subsequent elections in the 2018-2019 term.
- A never-before-certified chief inspector who attends Baseline training AND three additional hours of approved training during the 2018-2019 period is eligible to serve as a certified chief inspector for all subsequent elections in the 2018-2019 period and is recertified for the 2020-2021 term.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Elections Training Coordinator Allison Coakley at allison.coakley@wi.gov or 608-261-2033.